CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.881
9 August 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 9 August 2001, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Carlos Amat Forés (Cuba)

GE.01-64128 (E) 150801 100901

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 881st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

According to the Secretariat, there is no speaker inscribed on the list for today and I will therefore outline briefly to you the results of my consultations with several delegations.

In our capacity as President, we have continued an intensive process of discussions, trying to cover a wide range of delegations from the various groups comprising the Conference. It is our intention to continue this endeavour, carrying out consultations during this week and next week. The preliminary comments that we are in a position to make, on the basis of the information that we have been receiving and the exchanges of views that we have been holding are as follows.

First of all, we have seen broad indications of support from all the delegations with whom we have held discussions for the efforts being carried out by the Chair to find a common denominator that could make it possible to overcome the stalemate which we have been facing with regard to the substantive items in our programme of work. We welcome this support and have been encouraged to continue with our efforts.

With that backing we have been exploring all the possibilities within our reach. We have been trying to find approaches that would enable us, if not to resolve the problem in its entirety, then at least to make some steps forward, however small, that would open up the way to progress and create conditions conducive to attaining a consensus on the programme of work.

Nonetheless, the discussions which we have held have reaffirmed that events outside of the Conference, in particular the current strategic and security scenario at the international level, have a negative impact on and affect this forum far more than the majority of us would wish.

There is a high level of expectation regarding the possible implications for the work of the Conference that the current dynamics of international events might have. At the same time, the majority of delegations would appear to be inclined to think that prospects for the immediate future of the Conference are not very encouraging.

Also, there has been a view widely shared by many delegations that one element of additional difficulty is the limited time remaining for the annual session of the Conference and this undermines efforts to advance with respect to substantive issues in the programme of work.

In this difficult situation, an encouraging sign has been the wish of delegations to maintain the credibility of the Conference and its existence as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for all matters relating to treaties on disarmament.

Even though at present the real possibilities of advancing and reaching a consensus regarding the programme of work are very limited, the majority of delegations have emphasized the need to retain what we have referred to as the "Amorim proposal" as the basis for continuing consultations.

(The President)

It is recognized that this proposal constitutes the summing up of a series of efforts made by members of the Conference and its successive presidents with a view to attaining a consensus.

The intention of the Chair is still to keep that proposal intact, unless in the next few days we see clear signals of real possibilities for advancing by changing it in some way.

Also, during the consultations we have noted broad support from delegations for the work of the three special coordinators appointed during the presidency of Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia, and a preparedness to continue with that work.

Many delegations are of the view that the appointment of these special coordinators constitutes a positive sign and a means of keeping the Conference active until such time as we have managed to overcome the current stalemate relating to the substantive items.

It is important to highlight the fact that, while we consider the work being done by the special coordinators to be most useful, there is broad awareness among delegations of the need to move forward on the substantive items which in the final analysis constitute the main raison d'être of this body.

In the open and informal consultations held last Thursday at the request of the special coordinator on improved and effective functioning of the Conference, the distinguished representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam, we noted the very active participation of delegations. That meeting, in our opinion, was a clear indication of the need to have reasonable time to continue the process of discussion recently started on the three items allocated to the special coordinators and possibly to reach consensual agreements.

In this connection, we are examining the level of acceptance of the possibility of recommending that the mandate of the special coordinators be continued during the session for the year 2002. If our research yields positive results, we would proceed to make recommendations to that effect to the next President, who, as everyone is aware, will be from Ecuador, for inclusion in the report of this session.

These, then, are our observations regarding the consultations that we have conducted.

May I ask whether any delegation wishes to take the floor?

That does not appear to be the case.

We have thus completed our business for today.

The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 16 August, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.